

CHAPTER NO. 662

SENATE BILL NO. 2601

By Herron

Substituted for: House Bill No. 2187

By Pinion, Ulysses Jones

AN ACT To name the newly remodeled National Guard Armory in Tiptonville in honor of the late General Clifton B. Cates.

WHEREAS, From time to time, our nation has given birth to great men whose numerous deeds of valor and honor stand as self-evident, leaving no need for reiteration of the details of their heroic service; and

WHEREAS, In the annals of United States military history, there have been few men of the august stature of General Clifton B. Cates, who served admirably as 19th Commandant of the United States Marine Corps, a man whose military career in service of the most inviolate principles of freedom and preparedness stand as exemplary testimony to the irrefutable value of the American way of life; and

WHEREAS, A native of Tiptonville, Tennessee, Clifton B. Cates graduated with a law degree from the University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Clifton B. Cates entered the Marine Corps as a Second Lieutenant in 1917 at the beginning of World War I, and during the course of the swiftly-moving two years that followed, the young man from Tiptonville had found his true element and the Marine Corps one of its most capable and colorful leaders; and

WHEREAS, Immediately on completion of officer training, Lieutenant Cates found himself commanding troops as a Platoon Leader in the 96th Company, Sixth Marines; his battalion sailed for France in January 1918; and

WHEREAS, After intensive combat training and a short tour in a quiet sector of the front, the Second Army Division, into which the Fourth Marine Brigade had been incorporated, was thrown into the crucial Second Battle of the Marne where Lieutenant Cates was wounded and gassed in his first combat action, but refused to be evacuated; and

WHEREAS, At Belleau Wood, Lieutenant Cates led the unit that captured the strategic village of Bouresches and succeeded to command the 96th Company when all officers senior to him became casualties; this was the first of five occasions that he was to command the 96th Company for this same reason; and

WHEREAS, General Cates holds the singular distinction of being the most decorated Marine Corps officer of World War I, having been awarded the Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Cross with Oak-Leaf Cluster, Silver Star with Oak-Leaf Cluster and Purple Heart for his meritorious military service; France conferred upon him the Legion of Honor and Croix de Guerre with one gilt star and two palms; and

WHEREAS, A career military man whose exemplary service spanned three wars, Lieutenant Colonel Cates was chosen as Commanding Officer, First Marines in May 1942, and shortly thereafter sailed to the Pacific with the First Marine Division in World War II; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Cates' regiment had the distinction of winning the first major engagement on Guadalcanal, where the regiment annihilated the formidable Ichiki Detachment; and

WHEREAS, On September 16, 1942, he was promoted to Brigadier General and on February 1, 1944, to Major General; and

WHEREAS, In June 1944, Major General Cates returned to the Pacific to assume the post of Commanding General of the Fourth Marine Division near the end of the Saipan operation and commanded the Division in the assault of Tinian and throughout Iwo Jima and for the remainder of World War II; and

WHEREAS, General Cates was one of the few officers of any branch of the United States armed forces to command, under fire, a platoon, a company, a battalion, a regiment and a division; and

WHEREAS, On January 1, 1948, Major General Cates was promoted to General and assumed the prestigious post of Commandant of the Marine Corps, in which office he was destined to have an eventful administration; and

WHEREAS, During his meritorious service as Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Cates played an integral role in rescuing the Corps from relegation to obscurity in post-war reorganization of the armed forces; and

WHEREAS, General Cates' forthright and enlightening testimony before the House Armed Services Committee partially tempered and rechanneled efforts to relegate the Corps to a minor and subsidiary role and paved the way for subsequent passage of Public Law 416, which landmark legislation set the ready combat strength of the Marine Corps at three divisions and three corresponding aircraft wings; and

WHEREAS, When the outbreak of hostilities in Korea faced the Commandant in a crisis of immediate urgency, General Cates, as a result of great organization, efficiency and alacritous action, was able to send the First Provisional Marine Brigade and its air component to the Far East nine days following the order for its activation; and

WHEREAS, Thus, the Marine Corps, under General Cates' sagacious and capable mentorship, did accomplish its mission as the nation's force-in-readiness, and at a time when attrition had seriously sapped its strength; and

WHEREAS, General Cates' administration as Commandant also saw the practical development by the Marine Corps of two important tactical innovations; the helicopter and body armor; and

WHEREAS, During his illustrious military career, he earned three Presidential citations and ten Bronze Stars, while living his life with courage and conviction; and

WHEREAS, General Cates remains the only Tennessean to have ever attained the rank of four-star general; and

WHEREAS, General Cates was born and raised at Cate's Landing in the West Tennessee bayou region of Lake County, and even after a lifetime of exemplary service to his country all over the world, he always considered Lake County to be his home; and

WHEREAS, The Lake County Commission, various veterans organizations, and numerous other prominent citizens have expressed the desire to name the new National

Guard Armory in Tiptonville in honor of this valiant Marine of great distinction, courage and character, whose unremitting service to his country spanned three wars and five decades; and

WHEREAS, This General Assembly most heartily concurs with this excellent proposal; now, therefore,


BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the newly remodeled National Guard Armory in Tiptonville, Lake County is hereby designated as the "General Clifton B. Cates Armory" as a lasting tribute to one of the most highly decorated soldiers and one of the most outstanding citizens this state has ever produced.

SECTION 2. That the Department of Military is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating such edifice as the "General Clifton B. Cates Armory".


SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.


JOHN S. WILDER
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE


JIMMY NAIFEH, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PASSED: March 16, 1998

APPROVED this 25th day of March 1998


DON SUNDQUIST, GOVERNOR